

DATE: November 8, 2011

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Edgar Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: APPLE Schools and REAL Kids Update

ORIGINATOR: Tanni Parker, Assistant Superintendent, Student Learning Services

RESOURCE STAFF: Kim Hordal-Helwka, Debbie Jackson, Marg Schwartz, Erin Wright, Corrie Ziegler

REFERENCE: GBE.BP/GBE.AR: Health and Wellness of Staff and Students, www.appleschools.ca

ISSUE

In support of the Board's policy on health and wellness for staff and students, this report provides an update to the September 22, 2009 Board report entitled Health and Wellness: REAL Kids and APPLE Schools Update (Attachment I). Related research on the health and well being of district students through the APPLE Schools (*Alberta Project Promoting Active Living & Healthy Eating*) and REAL Kids (*Raising Healthy Eating and Active Living Kids in Alberta*) projects will be shared.

BACKGROUND

The APPLE Schools initiative intervention project was implemented in 2008 with the aim of changing the school environment to improve nutrition and fitness and prevent childhood obesity. REAL Kids is a joint project of the School of Public Health, University of Alberta, and Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW). The intent of REAL Kids Alberta (Attachment II) is to help evaluate the impact of the *Healthy Weights for Children and Youth* initiative from AHW and provide some measureable behavioural and health outcomes for children in Alberta. For additional background information see Attachment I.

CURRENT SITUATION

The APPLE Schools initiative is now in its fourth year as an intervention research project and involves 40 schools across Northern Alberta, 14 within Edmonton Public Schools (Attachment III). Participating schools continue to be provided with training and supports from APPLE Schools to assist school communities to develop healthy, physically active and positive social environments. Parents, students, staff and community stakeholders work together to influence students' knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviour to improve their health.

In two years APPLE Schools demonstrated:

- improved nutritional habits, including a 10 per cent increase in vegetable and fruit consumption and a 12 per cent reduction in overall caloric intake;
- increased physical activity levels which are now higher than the provincial average;
- a 14 per cent reduction in obesity levels; and
- positive health environments in school communities. (Attachment IV)

Data specific to Edmonton Public APPLE Schools will be included in the Board presentation on November 8, 2011.

September 2011 Expansion:

- APPLE Schools expanded from four to 14 Edmonton Public Schools (2008 to 2011)
- APPLE Schools developed a First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) cohort to focus on First Nations populations. Two Edmonton Public Schools (Prince Charles and Sherwood) received full time facilitators in this cohort. Full time facilitators allow for increased implementation of APPLE Schools while focusing on cultural activities such as traditional games and foods.
- APPLE Schools financially supports different implementation models which include: 0.8, 0.5, 0.2 FTE positions assigned as a School Health Facilitators (SHF). There are eight lead teachers seconded for 0.2 FTE to be a SHF.
- APPLE Schools provided training for all lead teachers in August and lead teachers will continue to receive support from a full-time mentor facilitator.

KEY POINTS

- The APPLE Schools and REAL Kids Research Project which is currently in 20 district schools is aligned with District Priority “promote health and wellness for all students and staff”, and with the District Plan as it pertains to enhancing quality teaching and supports for diverse learners. This project is one example of how district staff are developing and implementing strategies to promote health and citizenship in students. As well, the creation of an FNMI cohort which includes two district schools, and focuses on cultural activities, speaks to the development and implementation of interventions for diverse learners.
- The APPLE Schools and REAL Kids Research Project demonstrates one way schools, families and community partners can work together to provide safe, caring, healthy, diverse, inclusive and equitable learning environments that engage students to achieve their full academic, physical and social potential.
- The APPLE Schools and REAL Kids Research Project is an example of the leadership role lead teachers can take in promoting health and wellness for all staff and students. This project promoted healthy food and beverage choices, as well as regular physical activity. It encouraged students, staff and parents to examine their nutrition and physical activity practices, and provided opportunities, support and encouragement for staff and students to eat healthy foods and participate in daily physical activity.
- The APPLE Schools and REAL Kids Research Project is an example of how school data can inform daily practice, and lead to improved learning and health.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

- ATTACHMENT I Board Report: Health and Wellness: Real Kids and APPLE Schools Update, September 22, 2009
- ATTACHMENT II Excerpt from Sample Real Kids Alberta Evaluation School Report
- ATTACHMENT III Edmonton Public Schools Participating in REAL Kids and/or APPLE Project
- ATTACHMENT IV APPLE Schools Backgrounder

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EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 22, 2009

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Health and Wellness: REAL Kids and APPLE Schools Update

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett and J. Bidulock, Assistant Superintendents

RESOURCE

STAFF: Gloria Chalmers, Louise Osland, Marg Schwartz, Don Zabloski, Corrie Ziegler

INFORMATION

In support of the Board's policy on health and wellness this report provides an update on research being conducted on the health and well being of district students. The facilitator of this research is Dr. Paul Veugelers, School of Public Health, University of Alberta. The research project is long term in nature and will focus on results from the APPLE (Alberta Project Promoting active Living & healthy Eating) and REAL Kids (Raising healthy Eating and Active Living Kids in Alberta) projects as outlined below. It will provide the District with an exceptional opportunity to develop strategies for the District's context that will be relevant to all district schools. Evidence (Sallis, Veugelers, Shephard, Tremblay) supports the concept that children who are well nourished and physically active perform better academically. Therefore, the importance of developing and supporting strategies to promote healthy, active students cannot be understated.

The APPLE Schools initiative is a three and a half year intervention research project which began in January 2008 aimed at changing the school environment to improve nutrition and fitness and prevent childhood obesity. It involves 10 schools in the greater Edmonton area, four within Edmonton Public (Appendix I). Each participating school has been provided with a trained and supported, full-time, school health facilitator to assist school communities to develop healthy, active environments. The initiative is based on the successful Annapolis Valley Health Promoting Schools (AVHPS) *Make the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice* project and was adapted for the Alberta context.

REAL Kids is a joint project of the School of Public Health, University of Alberta, and Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW). The intent of REAL Kids Alberta is to help evaluate the impact of the *Healthy Weights for Children and Youth* Initiative from AHW and provide some measureable behavioural and health outcomes for children in Alberta. Baseline data was collected in the spring of 2008 and a second evaluation will occur in the spring of 2010. A total of 3,935 Grade 5 students and 4,209 parents from 174 randomly selected schools from across Alberta were surveyed. The sample includes 15 Edmonton Public Schools (Appendix I).

Summary baseline data from REAL Kids indicates the following:

- Among Grade 5 students in Alberta, 29 per cent are overweight or obese. This is substantially higher than estimates from an earlier study in 2004 which indicated that 22 per cent of Alberta children and youth aged two to 17 were overweight or obese.
- The majority of students are not meeting Canada's Food Guide recommendations. Only 27 per cent of students are consuming enough vegetables and fruits (six servings per day is recommended).
- For all Grade 5 students in Alberta, 47 per cent spend three hours or more per day in front of a screen outside of school hours. This exceeds recommendations from the Canadian Pediatric Society of two hours or less per day of total time in front of a screen.
- The majority of Grade 5 students are not sufficiently physically active - only 26 per cent report being physically active.
- Parent responses indicated strong support for a school environment that promotes healthy eating (94 per cent) and Daily Physical Activity (98 per cent).

As a result of a year and a half experience with APPLE schools, the following has been achieved. These schools:

- Provided ongoing support to staff in other district Schools and Edmonton Catholic Schools by presenting sessions at events such as the fall Wellness symposium. They also provided mentorship to other Edmonton Public Schools involved in wellness initiatives; e.g., Balwin, McKernan.
- Developed 3 year strategic plans in collaboration with key stakeholders including parents, students, staff, administration and community partners to improve healthy eating and active living (HEAL) in their school communities.
- Coordinated monthly, themed HEAL campaigns which include bulletin board displays, newsletters for parents (translated into Punjabi for one school), student activities and daily announcements for all students.
- Offered daily physical activities and provided educational opportunities on nutrition and physical activity curricula for teachers including demonstration lessons, half-day in-services, staff meetings, bulletin boards in the staff rooms, and increased teacher resources.
- Coordinated parent information sessions on healthy lunches and snacks during events for parents at the school; e.g., meet the teacher, Celebrations of Learning

As part of the APPLE Schools initiative, the APPLE Schools and 4 other district schools participated in a pedometer study. The results of that study will be added to the APPLE Schools 2009 Report (Appendix II) at a later date. District reports with the complete results of the 2008 REAL Kids evaluation will also be provided at a later date and subsequently after the 2010 evaluation is completed. This evaluation will include the APPLE Schools and the schools which participated in the initial evaluation in the spring of 2008. Other plans include a further dissemination of the results of the REAL Kids evaluation amongst school administrators and to provide opportunities for APPLE Schools, and other district schools focusing on wellness to meet and discuss strategies to improve practice.



The REAL Kids Alberta Evaluation

The Raising healthy Eating Active Living Kids Alberta (REAL Kids Alberta) evaluation is a joint project of the School of Public Health, University of Alberta, and Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW). The intent of this evaluation is to assess the impact of Alberta Health and Wellness's Healthy Weights Initiative and to provide some measurable behavioural and health outcomes for children in Alberta. For information on the Healthy Weights Initiative, go to: www.ech.ab.ca/healthy_weights_initiative.htm.

The first phase of the REAL Kids Alberta evaluation took place in the spring of 2008 with the next phase of the evaluation to be completed in 2010. A total of 3935 Grade 5 students and 4209 parents were surveyed from 174 schools across Alberta.

The evaluation of Grade 5 students included:

- the Harvard Food Frequency Questionnaire for Children and Youth (a dietary assessment tool) to assess dietary habits and nutrient intake
- self-reported information on physical activity, screen-time and recognition of AHW programs
- measurement of heights and weights to determine overweight and obesity from calculation of Body Mass Index.

The parents of participating students were asked for consent and to complete a survey to determine their socioeconomic background, support for health-related policy in schools and recognition of AHW programs.

The principals of participating schools were asked to complete a survey on school environment, implementation of provincial programs and recognition of AHW programs.

Summary of Results

- Among Grade 5 students in Alberta, 29% are overweight or obese. This is substantially higher than estimates from an earlier study in 2004, which indicated that 22% of Alberta children and youth aged 2 to 17 were overweight or obese.

- The majority of Grade 5 students are not meeting Canada's Food Guide recommendations; only 27% of students are consuming enough vegetables and fruits (a minimum of six servings per day is recommended).
- For all Grade 5 students in Alberta, 47% spend three hours or more per day in front of a screen outside of school hours. This exceeds recommendations from the Canadian Paediatric Society of two hours or less per day of total screen time.
- The majority of Grade 5 students are not sufficiently physically active; only 26% report being sufficiently physically active.
- Parent responses indicate strong support for a school environment that promotes healthy eating (90%) and daily physical activity (95%).

School Reports

Each participating school will receive a school report with results from the 2008 evaluation. Results specific to each school are compared to the provincial average for such things as:

- students' eating behaviours
- parental support of healthy eating at school
- students' physical activity and parental encouragement of physical activity
- students' sedentary activities.



For further information on the REAL Kids evaluation, please contact:

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YOUR NEXT STEPS



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- For further information related to this evaluation, go to www.realkidsalberta.ca.
- Information from this report may be used to identify areas of strength within your school community or areas of concern that can be addressed by health promotion activities.
- Share the results with students, school staff, parents and community stakeholders, such as your Regional Health Promotion Coordinators from Alberta Health Services.
- Use the results of this evaluation to identify areas for collective action within your school authority.
- Go to www.everactive.org, the Ever Active Schools Web site, where you will find information about:
 - education of students, parents and staff
 - creating supportive physical and social environments in school communities
 - community partnership
 - assessment: Healthy Assessment Tools for Schools (HATS)
 - planning and policy development
 - assistance with promoting physical activity and healthy eating.

- Support parent or teacher requests to submit proposals to fund Healthy School Initiatives, such as the Healthy School Community Wellness Funds (www.achsc.org/wellness_fund.htm).
- Use government approved guidelines and resources such as the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth (www.healthyalberta.com).
- Go to the following Web sites for further information:
 - www.achsc.org
 - www.healthyalberta.com/HealthyPlaces/201.htm
 - www.appleschools.ca/
 - www.healthyeatingatschool.ca
 - www.actionschoolsbc.ca/content/home.asp
 - www.dashbc.org

For more information
on this report, please contact:

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Edmonton Public Schools Participating in REAL Kids and/or APPLE Project 2011

Athlone Elementary*
Belmead Elementary*
Brightview Elementary*
Daly Grove Elementary
Donnan Elementary
Sakaw Elementary*
Homesteader Elementary*
Hillview Elementary*
Glendale Elementary*
Inglewood Elementary*
JA Fife School
Lee Ridge Elementary*
Beacon Heights School
McKernan School
Prince Charles Elementary*
Sifton Elementary*
Windsor Park School
Sherwood Elementary*
Tipaskan School*
Youngstown Elementary*

* Schools that participate in both the APPLE School Project and REAL Kids Evaluation.

The other schools identified participate in the Real Kids Evaluation as a way to measure behavior and health outcomes in relation to health and wellness strategies they have implemented in their school communities.



Alberta Project Promoting
active Living & healthy Eating



Creating healthy school communities in Alberta

The Alberta Project Promoting active Living and healthy Eating (APPLE Schools) is helping to define effective ways to create healthy school communities in Alberta.

The program motivates change and transforms school environments for improved learning and health. The spin-off effect is a transformation of communities.

Our purpose

1. To improve healthy living habits of students.
2. To increase knowledge about healthy living for parents, students, teachers and the school community.
3. To apply and sustain Comprehensive School Health in school communities.
4. To sustain capacity for healthy environments in school communities.

Overweight and obesity is a worldwide problem

Unfortunately, overweight children often become overweight adults who are at greater risk for type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and other chronic diseases.

In Alberta, only 27% of Grade 5 students meet the recommendations for vegetable and fruit intake while 67% eat junk food twice a day. Only 27% of these students report being physically active.

With 29% of Grade 5 students overweight or obese, action is urgently needed.

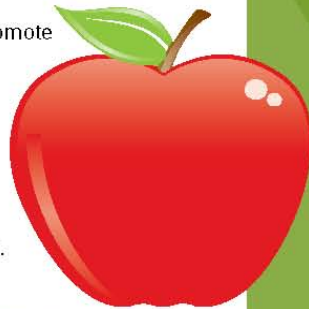
These statistics were calculated in 2008 based on the data gathered by the REAL Kids Alberta evaluation funded by Alberta Health and Wellness.



Positive change can happen in schools

In 2006, the World Health Organization found that the most effective school-based health promotion programs for changing behaviour were those focused on positive social behaviour, physical activity and healthy eating.

Healthy school communities promote wellness and strive to create environments that foster lifelong health and wellness. The approach used to create active, healthy school communities is known as the health-promoting school approach or Comprehensive School Health.



APPLE Schools changes poor health trends

Since 2008, APPLE Schools has been instrumental in reversing poor health trends and creating healthy school communities in Alberta.

These results* are in contrast with provincial trends. In two short years, APPLE Schools demonstrated:

- improved nutritional habits, including a 10% increase in vegetable and fruit consumption and a 12% reduction in overall caloric intake;
- increased physical activity levels which are now higher than the provincial average;
- a 14% reduction in obesity levels; and
- positive, healthy environments in all school communities.

APPLE Schools makes a positive difference!

* For information on the research conducted in the schools, visit www.realkidsalberta.ca.



APPLE Schools are fun places to learn

School communities work together

Everyone—including parents, students, staff and community stakeholders—works together to influence students' knowledge, skills, attitude and behavior to improve their health.

Dedicated staff

Each APPLE School benefits from the influence of a dedicated school health facilitator. This person works with the school community to make positive changes to school environments so that healthy choices are easy to make.

Programs are unique in each school

Unique activities are designed to suit the needs of each school. Activities may include planting classroom gardens, offering healthy hot lunches, providing after-school cooking classes for students and their families, or scheduling family fun nights in the gym.

Results are measured regularly

Each year, the effect of changes in nutrition and physical activity among children are measured. Using this information and sound evidence, school health facilitators work with their school community to modify action plans in order to improve health for children.

Branching out – Building on success

Since 2008, APPLE Schools communities have experienced the benefits of working together to create an environment that supports lifelong health.

It is clear that the right program aimed at improving healthy living habits can make a lasting and practical difference to the health and well-being of children. This innovative, community-oriented program is backed by sound research that annually measures change in knowledge, attitude and behavior. It is unique in Canada.

As of September 2011, APPLE Schools will be expanding to 41 schools in Northern Alberta. This expansion includes urban and rural schools, as well as First Nations, Metis and Inuit schools.

APPLE Schools leadership

APPLE Schools has a strong, experienced team. It is directed by world-renowned epidemiologist Paul J. Veugelers, and supported by Marg Schwartz, an expert in school health policy, and a strong team of managers and school health facilitators.

School health facilitators stationed in each school have broad expertise in education, nutrition, physical activity and other disciplines. In addition, the team is backed by researchers experienced in nutrition, physical activity, comprehensive school health and community development.



Making the healthy choice the easy choice!

APPLE Schools is pleased to collaborate with the following school communities:

Since 2008

Aspen View Public Schools

Landing Trail Intermediate School

Edmonton Catholic Schools

Blessed Kateri School
Holy Cross Académie Internationale
St. Benedict School

Edmonton Public Schools

Belmead School
Lee Ridge School
Sifton School
Tipaskan School

Elk Island Catholic Schools

St. Luke School

Elk Island Public Schools

Lamont School

As of January 2011

Fort McMurray Catholic Schools

Good Shepherd School
St. Anne School

Fort McMurray Public Schools

Timberlea School
Westview School

As of September 2011

Alexander First Nation Education Authority

Kipohakaw Education Centre*

Aspen View Public Schools

Whispering Hills Primary School

Edmonton Catholic Schools

Annunciation School
Our Lady of Peace School
St. Elizabeth Seton School
St. Francis of Assisi*

Edmonton Public Schools

Athlone School
Brightview School
Glendale School
Hillview School
Homesteader School
Inglewood School
Prince Charles School*
Sakaw School

Sherwood School*

Youngstown School

Elk Island Catholic Schools

St. Theresa Catholic School
Father Kenneth Kearns Catholic School

Fort McMurray Catholic Schools

Father Beauregard School
École St. Paul School
Sister Mary Phillips School

Fort McMurray Public Schools

Beacon Hill School
École Dickinsfield School
Thickwood Heights School

Mother Earth's Children's Charter School*

Northland School Division #61

St. Theresa School*
Kateri School*

* First Nations, Métis, Inuit Schools



Contact Us

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